



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement  
801 North First Street, Room 400  
San José, California 95110-1795

## GENERAL PLAN REPORT

### 2002 Summer Hearing

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:  
P.C. 8/12/02 Item:

File Number:  
GP02-06-02b

Council District and SNI Area:  
6 – N/A

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:  
99

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):  
455-31-053 and -055

Project Manager: Deanna Chow

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

General Plan amendment request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial with a Mixed Industrial Overlay to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC)

**LOCATION:** East side of Evans Lane, approximately 800 feet northerly of Curtner Avenue

**ACREAGE:** 6.0

#### APPLICANT/OWNER:

Department of Housing/Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority and City of San Jose

#### GENERAL PLAN LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION DIAGRAM DESIGNATION:

Existing Designation: Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay

Proposed Designation: Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC)

**EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT(S):** A(PD) – Planned Development

#### SURROUNDING LAND USES AND GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION(S):

North: Multi-family residential housing – High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC)

South: Women's Residential Facility – Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay

East: Mobile Home Park and State Route 87 – High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC)

West: Almaden Expressway

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

Mitigated Negative Declaration

#### PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) and a floating Public Park/Open Space designation

Approved by:

Date:

#### PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

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**CITY COUNCIL ACTION:**

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**CITY DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED:**

- Department of Transportation – A long-term traffic impact analysis (TRANPLAN) was performed in conjunction with GP02-06-02a that indicated that the proposed land use change would not cause a significant long-term traffic impact.
- Department of Public Works – The project site is located in Flood Zone AH and in a State Liquefaction Zone. The Department of Public Works also indicated Evans Lane requires street improvements and may require improvements at the intersection of Evans Lane and Canoas Garden. A Traffic Impact Analysis Report was conducted and a discussion of the results are included in the Analysis section.
- Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services – The proposed amendment site is located in a park deficient area.

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**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:**

None received.

**ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This amendment proposes to change the *San Jose 2020 General Plan* Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC). The General Plan amendment was initiated by the Department of Housing in an effort to facilitate future affordable housing on the site. This is one of two General Plan amendments along Evans Lane proposing a change to a residential designation. The subject site does not have an approved residential zoning like the other amendment at the terminus of Evans Lane (GP02-06-02a). However, the Department of Housing is in the process of negotiating the acquisition of the land and would seek a developer should the General Plan amendment be approved.

The existing General Plan base designation allows for a range of light industrial uses. The Mixed Industrial Overlay provides for additional uses, such as churches, gymnasiums, and big box retailers. The proposed Transit-Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) land use designation permits wholly higher density residential projects or a mixed-use type development where neighborhood serving commercial can be provided on the first two floors and residential units above. The change in land use designation could potentially facilitate development of 330 dwelling units, assuming a density of 55 DU/AC.

## **BACKGROUND**

The land uses on Evans Lane have undergone a transition during the past twenty years through the implementation of several General Plan amendments. In 1982, the City Council initiated a General Plan amendment from Light Industrial to High Density Residential (at the time 12-25 DU/AC) for the mobile home park site (Willow Glen Mobilehome Park), which is to the east of the subject site. This action by the City Council was intended to establish the mobile home park as a permanent residential use, thereby preserving the supply of affordable housing, reducing the anxiety of potential relocation among mobile home park residents, and providing consistency with the Council-initiated rezoning from industrial to the mobile home zoning district.

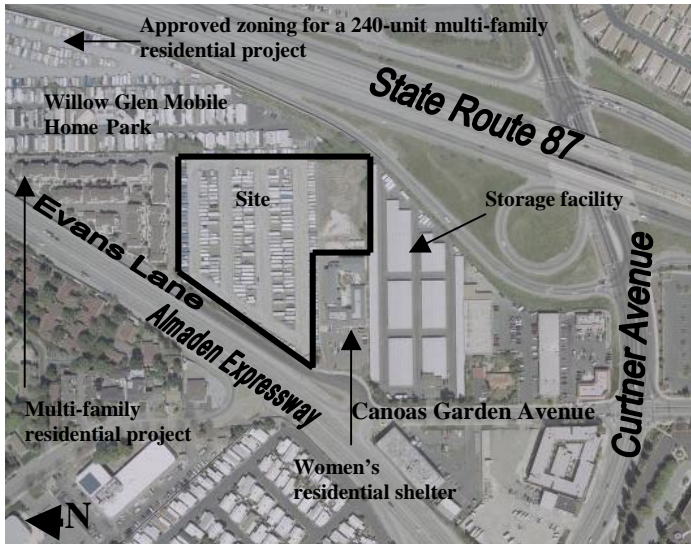
In 1989, the City Council approved High Density Residential (at the time 12-25 DU/AC) on the site adjacent to the mobile home park, located immediately north of the subject site. While staff realized the opportunity to place housing near transit facilities (Curtner Light Rail Station), staff had recommended to defer the amendment and await further analysis as part of the Housing Initiative Program. Constraints such as compatibility with the surrounding light industrial uses and isolation from services were issues identified in the staff report.

Most recently, a General Plan amendment was initiated in 1995 by staff to apply a Mixed Industrial Overlay on the Light Industrial designated properties between Highway 87, Almaden Expressway and Curtner Avenue. This area is characterized by a variety of industrial and commercial uses and is separated from the larger Monterey Corridor industrial area, making the area appropriate for application of the Mixed Industrial Overlay. This amendment resulted from City Council's concern regarding non-industrial uses locating in prime industrial areas. The addition of the Mixed Industrial Overlay provides opportunities for location of non-industrial uses in specific industrial areas, and could result in a more compatible environment with the nearby residential uses.

### **Site and Surrounding Uses**

The 6.0-acre site is currently undeveloped, but used for the storage of recreational vehicles. Evans Lane is an approximately 1,800-foot long cul-de-sac, that begins at its intersection with Canoas Garden Avenue and extends northward. The street is also narrow, approximately 20 feet wide in front of the amendment site and approximately 25 feet wide for the most of the remainder of the two-lane roadway.

The uses surrounding the site include a multi-family residential complex to the north, a mobile home park to the east, a women's shelter and mini-storage facility to the south, and Almaden Expressway to the west. The surrounding General Plan land use designations include High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) to the north and east, and Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay to the south. Land uses further north on Evans Lane include a property currently used as a mini-storage facility, but with a recently approved 240-unit residential zoning (PDCSH01-10-096) and a pending General Plan amendment for High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) (GP02-06-02a). The Curtner Light Rail Station is located to the south at the intersection of Curtner Avenue and Canoas Garden and is within walking distance of the site via Canoas Garden Avenue.



*Aerial view of subject site and surrounding uses*



*Looking south on Evans Lane, subject site on left*



*Looking south on Evans Lane, multi-family residential located adjacent to the site*



*Looking south towards the women's shelter and RV storage (subject site)*

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Land Use Compatibility/Policy Consistency**

The proposed amendment raises issues regarding vehicular and pedestrian safety on Evans Lane, the availability of parks and open space for new and existing residents, the loss of industrially designated land, and the appropriate residential density for the subject site. Specific performance standards such as setbacks, parking, and architectural treatment would be addressed at the rezoning stage to ensure compatibility between uses and the surrounding community.



## Evans Lane Improvements

Planning staff is concerned with the adequacy of Evans Lane and the intersection with Canoas Garden to safely accommodate the additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic that would be generated by a project of this size. Of particular concern is the irregular configuration of the Evans Lane/Canoas Garden Avenue intersection. In response, the Department of Public Works conducted a traffic impact analysis based on a hypothetical 231 residential unit project, which is approximately 38.5 DU/AC (gross acres), to analyze the feasibility of additional housing on Evans Lane. This level of analysis is typically not performed at the General Plan stage in the absence of a development application. Since access to the site can be provided only through the intersection of Evans Lane at Canoas Garden, a detailed analysis of this intersection was performed. The traffic analysis indicated that there are operational problems at this intersection caused by the ramps to and from Almaden Expressway. The traffic from this and the other recently approved residential zoning would increase the likelihood of a collision between vehicles turning left from Evans Lane onto Canoas Garden Avenue and those entering and exiting Almaden Expressway.

Three different scenarios were analyzed that involved closure of both, one, or none of the on/off ramps from Almaden Expressway to Canoas Garden Avenue. Of the three options and based on the 231-unit project as identified in the traffic report, the Department of Public Works would require the closure of both the on and off ramps from Almaden Expressway to Canoas Garden Avenue. Since Almaden Expressway is a County roadway, the closures of the on and off ramps would be subject to County approval. Preliminary discussions with the County have indicated that this would be feasible.

The closure of the on and off ramps from Almaden Expressway to Canoas Garden Avenue best addresses



*Looking westward on Canoas Garden Avenue at the on and off-ramps to Almaden Expressway*

several safety and operational issues. The access to Evans Lane from eastbound Canoas Garden from Almaden Expressway is poorly designed. The problem is exacerbated by cars treating westbound Canoas Garden as an extension of the on-ramp to Almaden Expressway. The closing of the on and off ramps would eliminate the left turn onto Evans Lane for vehicles exiting northbound Almaden Expressway and reduce speeds along Canoas Garden Avenue. Additionally, there are illegal pedestrian crossings across Almaden Expressway, creating pedestrian safety issues. The closure of the ramps and associated improvements could discourage people from using this as an access point. If closure of both ramps is approved by the County, the project

would be required to mitigate the intersections of Almaden Expressway northbound off-ramp/Curtner Avenue and Curtner Avenue/SR87 northbound on-ramp.

At the development stage, additional improvements would be necessary, such as curb, gutter, and sidewalk along the project frontage. The right-of-way requirement along the project frontage would be a minimum of 35 feet with additional right-of-way potentially necessary. The improvements would result in the widening of Evans Lane to accommodate two-way traffic, on-street parking one side, a park strip, and sidewalks to match the adjacent residential development.

The Department of Public Work's comments and identified project conditions are applicable at the Planned Development Zoning stage for the subject site if the development parameters remain unchanged. If the project description changes, the traffic impact analysis report would need to be revised and may require further mitigation measures. If additional units are added, it is likely that the level of mitigation would increase. The costs of all improvements would become the responsibility of the developer.

The proposed General Plan amendment would facilitate high density housing. As indicated in the analysis provided by the Department of Public Works, mitigation is possible to alleviate traffic and operational issues that result from this proposed amendment.

### Parks

The City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance requires all residential development to dedicate land or pay in-lieu fees for any net increase in residential units. Typically, in-lieu fees are paid for projects consisting of less than 50 new dwelling units. The proposed change to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) and any resultant development would add a significant number of new residents to an area that is already lacking in parks and open space.

Staff is recommending the placement of a "floating" Public Park/Open Space designation on the site to clarify the City's preference for on-site parkland. To provide flexibility at the zoning stage, the Public Park/Open Space designation is "floating" on the property and is not specifying a particular location or acreage. The amount of required parkland would be based upon the Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the number of dwelling units proposed at the zoning stage. The location of the park would be determined in the context of a proposed development.

As identified in the General Plan, the Service Level Objective is to have 3.5 acres of neighborhood/community serving parkland per 1,000 population. The Public Park/Open Space designation would help ensure the development of a park in the area at the zoning stage which would not only benefit the new residents, but the existing nearby residents. The addition of the floating park designation is consistent with the Parks and Recreation Goal #1 which states that the City should consider, as an objective, the provision of a neighborhood community park within a reasonable walking distance for each resident.

Staff recommends adding a floating Public Park/Open Space designation on the subject site to address the area's deficiency of parks to serve its residents.

### Loss of Industrial Lands

Light Industrial designated lands are important in supporting the City's economic base and providing employment opportunities for residents in the City. The task of balancing housing demand with the need to maintain a supply of industrial land to support economic development is difficult. Staff has actively been pursuing preservation measures such as the removal of the Mixed Industrial Overlay on over 600 acres, primarily in the North San Jose and Monterey Corridor, as a mechanism to preserve industrial lands for strictly industrial uses. Over the past 20 years, the City's supply of industrial lands has decreased by approximately 30% through General Plan amendments. By the end of 2001, the City had over 2,100 acres of land General Planned Heavy Industrial and 1,200 acres of Light Industrial lands remaining.

The existing General Plan land use designation on the subject property is Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay. The area is typified by low intensity industrial and commercial uses. The Evans Lane area is continuing to transition from an industrial to residential neighborhood. This is evident by the recently approved high density residential zoning which removed the pocket of industrial land at the end of Evans Lane. Thus, much of Evans Lane is either already occupied by or planned for residential uses.

The proposed change from an industrial to residential land use designation should not be an indication for change in the Monterey Corridor industrial area given its location across State Route 87 and the Union Pacific railroad lines. Staff does not anticipate that this amendment would place pressure on the remaining 8.5 acres of Light Industrial lands on Evans Lane. The women's residential shelter and storage facility located to the south of the site on industrially designated land appear to be viable uses that are compatible with residential uses (see attached color General Plan map).

### Residential Density

Staff recommends amending the General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram from Light Industrial with Mixed Industrial Overlay to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC). The High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) designation, like Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC), allows for high density housing which is appropriate given the proximity of the site to the Curtner Light Rail Station. While the designation does not allow for as much commercial use as the Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) designation, significant commercial activity at this site is not considered viable due to the limited access to the site. The maximum density of 50 dwelling units per acre would ensure compatibility in scale and character with the adjacent high density housing to the north.

The proposed General Plan amendment on subject site provides an opportunity to further facilitate housing opportunities in close proximity to light rail. The proposed land use change is consistent with several General Plan Major Strategies, including Growth Management, Housing and Sustainable City. These strategies support the increase of residential densities near rail stations, infill development and efficient use of resources. The proposed amendment is also consistent with several General Plan Goals and Policies which encourage higher density housing near light rail lines and other major transportation facilities. The Balanced Community Policy #2 supports the integration of housing with transportation systems and the Residential Land Use Policy #3 states that locations near light rail transit stations and along bus transit routes are preferable for higher density housing. The intensification of areas near access to transit allows for higher density housing in appropriate urban locations, where city services and facilities are located, resulting in reduced sprawl and efficient use of resources.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The property owners and occupants within a 1,000-foot radius were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on July 8 and 10, 2002. They also received a notice of the public hearings to be held on the subject amendment before the Planning Commission in August and City Council in September. In addition, the Department's web-site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedule. This site is used by the community to keep informed with the status of the amendments.

At the community meetings, several community members expressed concern regarding traffic on Curtner Avenue and operational issues, indicating that the on- and off-ramps to and from Almaden Expressway are unsafe. Additionally, community members expressed that improvements were needed along Evans

Lane for housing, including additional parking. One member expressed concern regarding the loss of small light industrial sites.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning staff recommends High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) and a floating Public Park/Open Space designation.

#### **Attachments**

PBCE002/GP\_Team/2002Annual Review/Staff Reports/Summer Review/GP02-06-02b.sr.doc